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**Introduced by Senator Jackson**

February 20, 2013

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An act to amend Section 382 of the Public Utilities Code, relating to energy.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 418, as introduced, Jackson. Energy: low-income energy efficiency programs.

Existing law requires the Public Utilities Commission to establish a program of assistance to low-income electric and gas customers, referred to as the California Alternate Rates for Energy or CARE program. Existing law requires programs provided to low-income electricity customers to be funded at not less than 1996 authorized levels based on an assessment of customer need.

This bill instead would require programs provided to low-income electricity customers to be funded at not less than 2000 authorized levels based on an assessment of customer need.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 382 of the Public Utilities Code is
- 2 amended to read:
- 3 382. (a) Programs provided to low-income electricity
- 4 customers, including, but not limited to, targeted-energy-efficiency
- 5 energy efficiency services and the California Alternate Rates for
- 6 Energy program, shall be funded at not less than ~~1996~~ 2000
- 7 authorized levels based on an assessment of customer need.

(b) In order to meet legitimate needs of electric and gas customers who are unable to pay their electric and gas bills and who satisfy eligibility criteria for assistance, recognizing that electricity is a basic necessity, and that all residents of the state should be able to afford essential electricity and gas supplies, the commission shall ensure that low-income ratepayers are not jeopardized or overburdened by monthly energy expenditures. Energy expenditure may be reduced through the establishment of different rates for low-income ratepayers, different levels of rate assistance, and energy efficiency programs.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit electric and gas providers from offering any special rate or program for low-income ratepayers that is not specifically required in this section.

(d) Beginning in 2002, an assessment of the needs of low-income electricity and gas ratepayers shall be conducted periodically by the commission with the assistance of the Low-Income Oversight Board. The assessment shall evaluate low-income program implementation and the effectiveness of weatherization services and energy efficiency measures in low-income households. The assessment shall consider whether existing programs adequately address low-income electricity and gas customers' energy expenditures, hardship, language needs, and economic burdens.

(e) The commission shall, by not later than December 31, 2020, ensure that all eligible low-income electricity and gas customers are given the opportunity to participate in low-income energy efficiency programs, including customers occupying apartments or similar multiunit residential structures. The commission and electrical corporations and gas corporations shall make all reasonable efforts to coordinate ratepayer-funded programs with other energy conservation and efficiency programs and to obtain additional federal funding to support actions undertaken pursuant to this subdivision.

~~These~~ *subdivision. These* programs shall be designed to provide long-term reductions in energy consumption at the dwelling unit based on an audit or assessment of the dwelling unit, and may include improved insulation, energy efficient appliances, measures that utilize solar energy, and other improvements to the physical structure.

- 1 (f) The commission shall allocate funds necessary to meet the
- 2 low-income objectives in this section.

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